IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

Claims 1 – 19 (Cancelled).

20. (New) A method of fastening an auxiliary joining element to a sheet metal work-piece wherein the auxiliary joining element includes a foot, comprising the steps of:

providing a die having a recess defined by a wall disposed in said die, wherein said wall is interrupted by die parts being movable radially inwardly of said wall;

retaining the sheet metal work-piece over said recess;

depressing the foot into the sheet metal work-piece thereby deforming the sheet-metal workpiece into said recess and forcing said die parts radially inwardly of said wall thereby simultaneously deforming said sheet metal work-piece into the foot and forming spaced undercuts into the foot for retaining the auxiliary joining element to the sheet metal work-piece.

21. (New) The method as set forth in claim 20, further including the step of forcing portions of the sheet metal work-piece spaced from the undercut into the undercut.

22. (New) The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein said step of depressing the foot into the sheet metal work-piece is further defined by forming wall sections into the sheer metal work-piece generally parallel to a depressing direction of the foot.

23. (New) The method as set forth in claim 20, further including the step of forcing said die parts radially outwardly while withdrawing the foot from said cavity thereby releasing the undercuts from said die parts.

24. (New) The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein said step of forming undercuts in the foot is further defined by forming at least three undercuts in the foot.

25. (New) The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein said step of depressing the foot into the sheet metal work-piece is further defined by providing the auxiliary joining element having an auxiliary shoulder and depressing the auxiliary shoulder downwardly thereby forcing the foot into the sheet metal work-piece.

26. (New) The method as set forth in claim 25, wherein said step of providing the auxiliary joining element having an auxiliary shoulder is further defined by locating the auxiliary shoulder adjacent the sheet metal work-piece.

27. (New) The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein said step of retaining the sheet metal work-piece over said recess is further defined by depressing two sheet metal work-pieces over said recess.

28. (New) The method as set forth in claim 27, wherein said step of depressing the foot into the sheet metal work-piece is further defined by depressing the foot into two sheet metal work-pieces.

29. (New) An auxiliary joining element and sheet metal work-piece assembly, wherein said auxiliary joining element includes a foot having a generally tubular shape and a central axis, comprising an outwardly directed projection disposed in said sheet metal work-piece formed by depressing said foot of said auxiliary joining element into said sheet metal work-piece, wherein said foot and said outwardly directed projection includes a plurality of undercut regions restricted in a peripheral direction to said foot thereby retaining said auxiliary joining element to said sheet metal work-piece and being spaced by wall sections extending generally parallel to said central axis of said foot.

30. (New) The assembly as set forth in claim 29, wherein said sheet metal work-piece comprises two sheet metal panels.

31. (New) The assembly as set forth in claim 30, wherein said auxiliary joining element includes a shaft.

32. (New) The assembly as set forth in claim 30, wherein said auxiliary joining element includes an inner thread defining a nut element.

33. (New) The assembly as set forth in claim 30, wherein said sheet metal work-piece is deformed upwardly into said foot along said central axis of said foot.

34. (New) An apparatus for fastening an auxiliary joining element to a sheet metal work-piece, comprising:

a plunger movable in pressing direction for deforming the sheet metal work-piece;

a die defining a recess with a peripheral wall being generally parallel to said pressing direction of said plunger and having movable wall sections spaced around said peripheral wall and being movable inwardly thereby forming an undercut in the auxiliary joining element and the sheet metal work-piece, wherein said plunger includes a holder adapted to engage the auxiliary joining element for driving the auxiliary holding element into the sheet metal work-piece.

IN THE DRAWINGS

Applicant proposes correcting Figure 7 submitted with the present application by including element number 7' indicating an auxiliary shoulder disposed upon the auxiliary joining element. A copy of the proposed drawing correction marked in red is included with this response.